

GAHANNA *BEST PRACTICES*



Creating a strong, manageable, and realistic set of *Best Practices* to guide the future development for the City of Gahanna,



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The City of Gahanna, Ohio represents a successful community in the Columbus area. Rich in heritage, diversity and a friendly environment, Gahanna is supported by a strong economy, an exceptional quality of life, affordable housing and a good school district. Together, these attributes make Gahanna an attractive place for people of different ethnic, socio-economic, cultural and religious backgrounds to live and do business.

Over the past decade, Gahanna's population has grown by 54% and has experienced significant growth related to central Ohio. With 31,664 residents, the city is continuing to expect growth well into the new millennium. Throughout this expansion, the Gahanna Department of Development has utilized planning principles that preserved the natural environment and established high standards for new construction.

In this document the Development Department has focused on defining a set of *Best Practices* to address the most desirable types of new construction and renovation. We define good development as functional, visually appealing, and distinctive from other surrounding communities. The public purposes guided by these *Best Practices* include the preservation of natural areas, aesthetics, and provision of a safe community.



In most cases high cost is not a prerequisite for high quality design, as exemplified by the above project (American Electric Power).

This process began by establishing the principles and criteria required for safe and aesthetically appealing development. It has culminated in the creation of two overall courses of *Best Practices*:

Ideal Design

- § Architecture
- § Signage
- § Landscaping
- § Refuse Enclosures

Exemplary Projects

- § Commercial
- § Residential
- § Office
- § Industrial

The recommendations are divided into two categories which will guide construction based on our most successful development. This document builds on what the City of Gahanna administration believes are well designed completed projects. Creating a strong, manageable and realistic set of best practices will become the underlying tool which Gahanna will utilize to monitor and sculpt future growth as we begin the new millennium.

The City of Gahanna embraces creativity in its development solutions. Vista Apartments, left, did just this in designing a castle-like atmosphere within its storm water retention area.



JUSTIFICATION

Over the past 15 years, Gahanna, like many other Columbus suburban cities, has grown and consequently developed a large percentage of its land mass. The challenge that faces Gahanna is to encourage new development that provides a service to the public while creating a visually desirable community.

Currently, there are many architectural styles and materials that characterize development within the city. To enhance the current development process and address aesthetic issues, it is necessary to provide illustrations of specific design ideals for potential developers. This document will provide a means to characterize the style of construction which is desired throughout the City of Gahanna.

Although this is not the first attempt by the City of Gahanna to encourage specific styles of design, it is the first to take a comprehensive approach. The city currently utilizes a codified ordinance to control development and



Residential development can be designed specifically to blend with the existing nature. Simple color and material selection can create a successful and quality development (Founder's Ridge).

The drawback of ordinances is that they rarely illustrate what is considered good design or what is aesthetically pleasing. These types of documents utilize minimums and maximums which are very objective and do not apply to aesthetics. The goal of **Best Practices** is to identify and highlight the most appealing building styles, materials, and those elements we seek to have illustrated.

Creativity, utilizing patterns and colors that relate to existing buildings and the surrounding environs, is considered to be a premium throughout development in the city of Gahanna. We encourage both traditional and contemporary design, while avoiding previous design pitfalls. Distinctive design is not only permitted but encouraged.

The use of similar materials and patterns will unify the perception of our community and create a character unique to Gahanna. It is not the intent of these **Best Practices** to establish standards that create a monotonous environment.

Without these guidelines and visual examples of what we feel is acceptable, the City of Gahanna runs the risk of creating an environment that does not represent the natural style that is reflective of Gahanna and its residents.

Part of what makes Gahanna attractive is its unique character, which is distinctive from other suburban cities. The guidelines throughout this document will capitalize on the best of the existing developments and shape future designs.



Visual displays of quality can help Gahanna create an environment which people find inviting and attractive (Daimler Group, Inc. – OfficeCenter)

EVALUATION CRITERIA

In an effort to assess existing development within Gahanna, evaluation criteria were established. The set of criteria that was created is grounded in the City's Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan functions to guide planning throughout the city.

Here we find that issues of buffering, screening, access, open space, compatibility, transition, and design all impact future development. However, for a *Best Practices* overview, we must look deeper into assessing positive development.

Success can be interpreted differently by each individual. Therefore, before identifying the successful and appropriate standards we need to define what is considered successful to the City of Gahanna.

We believe that to be deemed successful a development must utilize numerous positive qualities. Our review of projects looked at developments which are successful, based on occupancy, then evaluated each based on their positive attributes. The outcome has produced the explanations and pictures found throughout this publication.

Those evaluation criteria are as follows and explain the rationale behind the City of Gahanna's choice in *Best Practices*.

I. Longevity

One of the main features which makes a development a success is the ability for a given development to remain in the community as a viable business. This can be considered in several different ways. A commercial property may show strong longevity by maintaining positive sales and strong fiscal turnover for a number of years. Likewise, that same property could show longevity by simply being unique to the area. Both of the above types of longevity can be measured and considered appropriate. Our challenge is to decide what development in the city represents the attribute of longevity. Once we establish those areas with this quality we can then break down what has made those developments successful.

II. Aesthetic Quality

Aesthetic quality of a development is perhaps the most important feature of any development. What makes a building look good and attract people is precisely what contributes to the longevity of that development. In evaluating our developments for this publication, we closely examined the aesthetics of each structure.

The most important issues reviewed relate to the materials, methods and design of each structure. The characteristics also include the landscape, parking, and lighting features of the area.



Founder's Ridge

Although each of those features can be even further broken down into subcategories, we have focused on the category in general.

III. Access

Access is a particularly important aspect in evaluating development because it is key to the proper function of the facilities. For example, while a commercial structure such as a grocery store may provide needed services, if the access to that site is poor, then the development may suffer. Poor access discourages people from visiting, living in, or commuting to an area.

Conversely, a development with an efficient and effective access pattern can prosper because people find the experience worthwhile. All of the developments selected for these *Best Practices* have paid particular attention level to ease of access.

IV. Design

The Design section focuses specifically on the style and character of a development. Although we encourage unique design throughout the city, the character must still fit within the context of Gahanna's pattern language.



Gahanna subdivision



Gahanna condominiums

EVALUATION CRITERIA CONTINUED

In Gahanna's case, developments were evaluated based on the design principles which the city finds important. Some of those qualities are the styles of architecture, the elevations, landscape layout, and overall theme of the development.

Gahanna has a commitment to maintaining the natural environment while integrating innovative new development. The design of each new project is essential to creating a unified visual environment from existing development to new development.

V. Signage

As in many communities, Gahanna is continually facing signage issues. In evaluating signage in this *Best Practices* publication, evaluation criteria were focused on each individual sign studied.

Signage can positively affect the image projected. Quality design is reflected in the materials, colors, landscape and style encompassed throughout the features. Signage evaluation in Gahanna has been approached cautiously.

Gahanna maintains the highest quality of design and expects signage consideration. Developments showing success are characterized by the quality of signage. In striving for excellence, those developments have shown major concern for the design and materials used in the sign. Gahanna expects that signage be designed with those major themes in mind.

VI. Maintenance

One major aspect found in all successful development is a high level of maintenance. All examples used in this *Best Practices* show the optimum levels of maintenance.

Maintenance is a simple notion of the proper upkeep of the development. Keeping the building in good condition, repairing structural damages, and replacing broken lights are only a few maintenance issues. Landscape and parking lot upkeep is also very important.



Signage can be hit or miss. However, with quality design and thorough review it can be very successful (Stone Ridge Plaza).

Criteria Overview

- *Longevity*
We encourage construction and design that will stand the test of time.
- *Aesthetic Quality*
Looks make the difference in developments success.
- *Access*
The legibility and ease of circulation effects a potential clients perception of a development.
- *Design*
The style and quality of design...plus architectural integrity
- *Signage*
Commitment to quality is shown clearly in the signage.
- *Maintenance*
The upkeep of a development indicates a sense of pride in place.

Included in this criterion is the notion of ownership. Gahanna encourages active local ownership and participation in the maintenance of all new developments. Having owners who care and are concerned about the developments of the city is as important as any quality needed in a successful development. Our attempt has been to show development which is maintained and improved upon.

By committing to these evaluation criteria we have established standards by which development design can be guided.

IDEAL DESIGN

Architecture

Architecture may be the single most recognizable feature of any city. Gahanna is fortunate to have diverse architectural styles that, although different, are appropriate for the area. There are several architectural features that are considered desirable when developing the design of new buildings. Over time, styles of architecture and patterns of construction materials have been established within neighborhoods throughout the city. The illustrations below demonstrate how different uses on separate sites in the same general area can appear compatible. This is achieved through similar pitches on roof lines, matching the window in-fill color, and building materials. In addition, since roofing material is a significant visual element in many architectural designs, we encourage the use of the same roofing materials and colors.



Beecher Ridge Office Park



Graeter's Ice Cream Shop

Similarity in building materials and styles can help create a more aesthetically unified community. Gahanna encourages interaction between developers and city administration during all phases of approval and construction. We believe that this interaction and dialogue will ultimately create the best possible character.



Roger's Camer



Hoggy's Restaurant

IDEAL DESIGN CONTINUED

Signage

Next to architecture, signage is the most identifiable characteristic of a city. Although most signage is regulated through a zoning ordinance or code, these documents do not convey the desired character of signage. In Gahanna, we encourage signage that is both in the scale and character of the building's site. The illustrations below display how properly designed signage can complement the architecture of a development. Each of the signs are designed in the same style and with the same materials as the associated building.



Villas of Gahanna



Family Physicians of Gahanna and Theracare

The current zoning regulations stipulate the maximum height of permitted signage. Although not indicated in the ordinance, we have observed that signage that is designed low to the ground (3'-8') can provide a transition between the building and the adjacent roadway and increase the visibility of the signage and its business.

Additionally, signage reflects directly the themes and characteristics which make Gahanna unique. Signage helps to establish a visually appealing area for people to work and do business. It also can directly affect the success or lack of success of any commercial development. Attractive, well planned signage can say volumes about the level of services a business or other establishment may offer. Visually appealing signage does not simply add to Gahanna's aesthetic quality but also the success of the community as a whole.



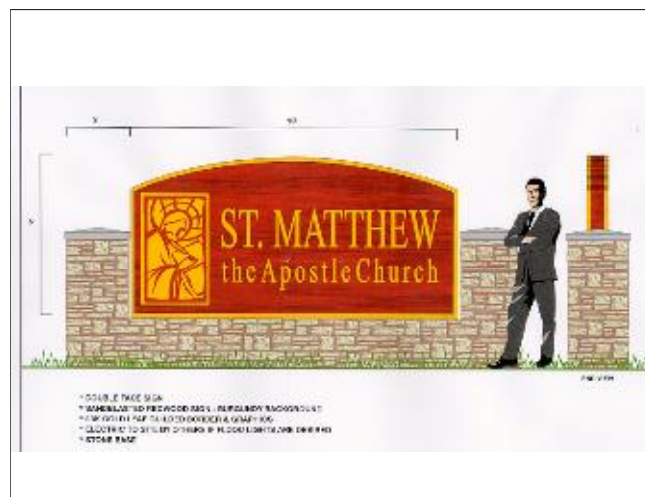
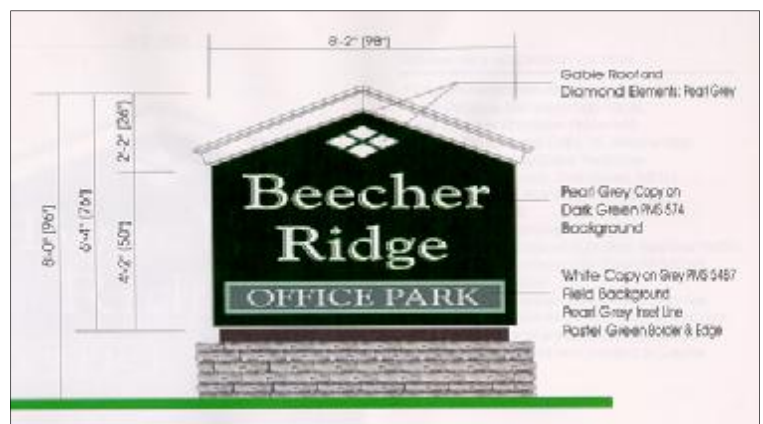
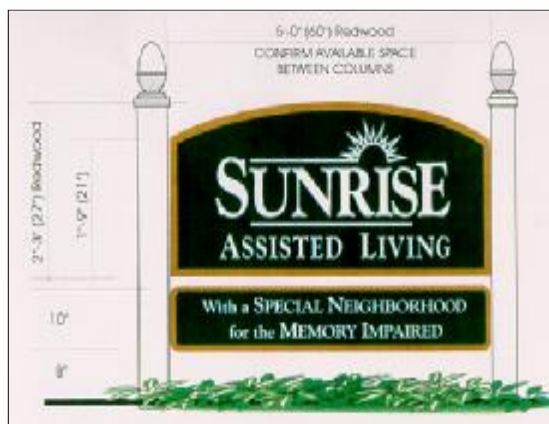
Heartland Bank



Vista Apartments

IDEAL DESIGN CONTINUED

Ideal Signage



Figures: City of Gahanna Department of Development

IDEAL DESIGN CONTINUED

Landscaping

The first impression of a business is often conveyed before a person enters the building. The design and maintenance of a building site speaks volumes for the commitment to quality provided by a business. Landscape architecture is one of the tools by which businesses can create the best possible first impression. It provides a scale and natural quality to the defined edges of the built environment. Plant materials, including trees, shrubs, and groundcovers should be designed to accentuate the architectural features of the buildings.



Daimler Group, Inc.



Schoedinger Funeral Home

Landscape design is only one part of the equation. As is the case with a business investment, the commitment to a building and the landscape is a long term endeavor. Even if a project has been designed and installed by the best consultants in the industry, unless it is consistently maintained the initial thought and money will be wasted. We encourage all property owners to commit to a yearly maintenance contract with a reputable landscape contractor.



OfficeCenter®



Heartland Bank.

IDEAL DESIGN CONTINUED

Refuse Enclosures

No one enjoys thinking about the subject of trash, however, today it is a part of our daily lives. Although it is not the most glamorous portion of a site development, refuse containers must be incorporated into the site and architectural design of every commercial development. The City of Gahanna Zoning Code has specific requirements for the screening of refuse containers. The illustrations below portray how refuse enclosures can be designed to reflect the style and character of the adjacent building.



*OfficeCenter-
OfficeCenter*



ter²



Max and Erma's



Huntington Bank

Features that should be considered in the design of refuse enclosures include the material of the main enclosure and the door, the pattern, and arrangement of those materials and the vehicular circulation to and around refuse containers. The location of the enclosure is critical for two reasons. First, it must be reasonably close to the building in order to visually relate the main structure. Second, the refuse container must be oriented in such a manner that it can accommodate the movement of modern refuse disposal vehicles.

EXEMPLARY PROJECTS

There are a number of projects that exist within Gahanna and surrounding communities that exemplify the style and character of development that is desired in the city. The following is a list of categories and associated exemplary projects that can be visited to clearly understand the city's expectations for design and implementation.

Residential Best Practices

1. Farm Creek - Intersection of Havens Corners Road and Farm Creek Drive
2. Village at Castle Pines - Intersection of North Hamilton Road and Castle Pines Drive
3. The Vistas - Intersection of North Hamilton Road and Vista Drive
4. Villas of Gahanna - Intersection of North Hamilton Road and Villa Oaks Lane
5. Rose Run - Intersection of East Johnstown Road and Dark Star Avenue
6. Lakes at Harrison Pond - Intersection of Morse Road and Harrison Pond Drive
7. Retreat at Harrison Pond - Intersection of Morse Road and Belcross Drive
8. Christopher Wren - Intersection of Morse Road and Christopher Wren Drive
9. Crossings of McKenna Creek - Intersection of Cherry Bottom Road and Crossing Creek Way
10. Founder's Ridge - Intersection of Stygler Road and Founder's Ridge Drive

EXEMPLARY PROJECTS CONTINUED

Office/Industrial Best Practices

1. The Daimler Building - 735 Taylor Road
2. AEP Headquarters - 850 Techcenter Drive
3. Beecher Ridge Office Park - 430 Beecher Road
4. OfficeCenter - 800 Techcenter Drive
5. OfficeCenter² - 825 Techcenter Drive
6. Chestnut Hill Office Park - 4625 Morse Road
7. Heartland Bank - 850 North Hamilton Road
8. Beecher Ridge Office Park - Beecher Road between North Hamilton Road and Johnstown Road

Commercial Best Practices

1. Village Square at Cherry Bottom - Intersection of Morse Road and Cherry Bottom Road
2. Vista Plaza - Intersection of North Hamilton Road and Vista Drive
3. Stone Ridge Plaza - Intersection of North Hamilton Road and Stone Ridge Lane
4. Founder's Plaza - Intersection of Granville Street and Mill Street
5. Schoedinger Funeral Home - Intersection of Johnstown Road and Beech Road
6. Roger's Corner - Intersection of Johnstown Road and Morse Road
7. Hoggy's Restaurant - Intersection of Johnstown Road and Morse Road

SUMMARY

As suggested in the introduction, the promise of future growth and development will have a significant impact on Gahanna. This document is intended to provide a series of visual guidelines for the detailed development of the City of Gahanna. The photographs depicted throughout this document illustrate the design characteristics which are valued in our city. The document also defines good development as functional, visually appealing and distinctive from other surrounding communities. The recommendations are divided into two courses, ideal design (architecture, signage, landscaping, and refuse enclosures) and exemplary projects (commercial, residential, office, and industrial), which will guide construction based on our most successful development.

Throughout future development, the Gahanna Department of Development will continue to utilize planning principles that preserve the natural environment and establish the highest standards for new construction. Creating a strong, manageable and realistic set of best practices will become the underlying tool which Gahanna will utilize to control, monitor and sculpt future growth as we move through the new millennium.

SOP: SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

Revised: 04 March 2000

A pre-application conference will be scheduled with the Zoning Administrator and Deputy Director of Development to review conceptual plans for new projects or additions to existing projects. During this conference the applicant will be provided all appropriate application forms, schedules, and code sections, and the Zoning Administrator will suggest any changes that need to be made before submission of the formal application to the Planning Commission. In addition, the Zoning Administrator will indicate to each applicant what information will be required upon submission, including but not limited to reduced plans, renderings, color samples and material samples. The Zoning Administrator will maintain written documentation of all actions and information provided at the pre-application meetings (i.e., meeting minutes). At this time the applicant will be advised to check with the Building Department and/or Engineering Department to obtain necessary information regarding required permits and payment of associated fees.

The Zoning Clerk or the Zoning Administrator will accept applications on or before 12:00PM on the scheduled deadline dates. The Zoning Administrator will check each application for content, completeness and accuracy as they come in. If the Zoning Administrator is not available, the Deputy Director of Development may check the application(s). If the application is not complete or accurate it will not be accepted. **It is the applicant's responsibility to provide all materials as required on the applications.** The Zoning Clerk and/or the Zoning Administrator will advise each applicant that s/he or a representative needs to be present at the public hearing and verify the date and time of said meeting. The Deputy Clerk of Council will send an agenda to the applicant prior to the meeting date. The number of Public Hearing items (Subdivision Without Plat, Flood Plain Use, Conditional Use, Final Development Plan, Home Occupation, Variance, Preliminary Plat, and Zoning Change) accepted will be limited to five (5) per meeting date. An applicant is encouraged to submit more than one application for an address; in this case, multiple applications will be considered as one Public Hearing item. There will be no limitation on Non-Public Hearing applications (Final Plat and Design Review).

Each application will be logged in, by the Zoning Clerk, on a computer spreadsheet and assigned a number. Seven copies and one original of each application will be forwarded to the Deputy Clerk of Council no later than Wednesday (12:00PM) of the week following the deadline date for submission to the Zoning Office. In addition, a list of all applications will be forwarded to all applicable the staff members for their review prior to the staff review meeting. In an effort to reduce paper consumption, staff members will need to review each application from the copy located in the zoning office.

In the event of a Monday holiday, applications will be forwarded to the Deputy Clerk of Council on the preceding Thursday by 12:00PM. One copy of the application will be appropriately labeled and filed in the Zoning Administrator's Office. In the case of multiple applications from one applicant, the original application form and one set of plans for each application must be filed with the Deputy Clerk of Council; one copy of each set of plans and a copy of each application form must be filed in the Zoning Office; but only one complete set of plans need be forwarded to the Deputy Clerk for each Planning Commission member. A copy of each application form being submitted must be attached to one complete set of plans forwarded to the Planning Commission members.

A staff review will be done for each application forwarded to Planning Commission. Staff members may include but are not limited to the Zoning Administrator, the Deputy Director of Development, the City Engineer or Assistant City Engineer, the Deputy Clerk of Council, the Parks Superintendent, and a representative from the Mifflin Township Fire Department. The review meetings will take place on Mondays at 3:00PM, ten days before each scheduled public hearing. All staff members are required to review the plans for each application prior to the staff meeting and come prepared to provide information regarding additional studies/review that must be completed prior to approval of the plan/plat. If this schedule changes for any reason, the Zoning Clerk will notify all participating staff members. If a staff member cannot attend, the Zoning Administrator will contact those absent to discuss pertinent information. The Zoning Clerk will attend the review meetings to

SOP: SUBMITTING APPLICATIONS TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION

(continued)

take minutes, which s/he will then prepare in memo form to Planning Commission. This memo will be reviewed and revised as deemed necessary by the Zoning Administrator. The Zoning Clerk will provide the Deputy Director a draft of the staff review memo by Wednesday at 5:00PM. The Deputy Director of Development will make any comments which must be incorporated into the document and resubmit to clerk by 10:00AM Thursday. Eight copies of the staff review will be forwarded, no later than noon on the Thursday before the Public Hearing, to the Deputy Clerk of Council for distribution to Planning Commission.

After Planning Commission has approved an application, and the Public Hearing minutes have been received from the Deputy Clerk of Council, The Zoning Administrator will date and sign the application as approved. The Zoning Clerk will copy said minutes and approved application and mail such to the applicant. This mailing process will be carried out in a timely fashion. A copy of the minutes and Finding of Fact, supplied by the Deputy Clerk of Council, will be included in the Zoning Division's file. At the conclusion of this process, the completed approved files shall be placed in the current year drawers of the Planning Commission and Design Review file cabinets. At the end of the calendar year, the current files will be integrated with the previous years' files in the aforementioned file cabinets.

Upon building occupancy for all Final Development and Design Review applications, the Zoning Division will conduct a site observation of each project. After the site review a list of any outstanding items will be forwarded to the owner. The owner must provide within 10 working days, a schedule of when all outstanding items will be complete. All outstanding items must be completed within 6 months of the date of the letter for the site observation. The applicant and owner are notified that the project will not be considered complete until any outstanding items are resolved.